SPAWN
THE DARK AGES
image
8
DIGITAL EDITION
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Todd McFarlane & Image Comics Present

Acts of Contrition

Dedicated to Terry Fitzgerald

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SPAWN DARK AGES 7 SUMMARY:

DuBlanc finds the Hellspawn in the village of Pom-De-Vierde, and they meet face to face. Covenant shows little interest in battling DuBlanc, but DuBlanc demands retribution. While following Covenant, DuBlanc encounters Immaculata, a Seraphic Huntress who mistakes him for the Hellspawn. After their initial encounter, Immaculata realizes her error and allows DuBlanc to leave with his life. The Hellspawn, who has no idea he is being hunted by Immaculata, is warned by Cogliostro of the danger that she presents.

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YOU SAY THIS ANGEL— THIS SERAPHIC HUNTRESS AS YOU CALL HER... SHE IS OUT TO SLAY ME?
VERY WELL THEN, I SAY.
YES.
I AM GLAD OF IT. I AM READY FOR THE DARK EMBRACE OF THE GRAVE.
THIS IS NO LIFE FOR A MAN.

OH, *PLEASE!* SOD YOU AND YOUR *SELF-PITY*, COVENANT. THIS IS NO JOKE.
THERE'S A SEETHING MAD ANGELIC *BITCH* WITH A BLOODY GREAT *SPEAR* AND SHE'S LOOKING TO *DO* YOU!
BELIEVE ME, I'VE SEEN THESE LASSIES IN ACTION. THERE'S *NOTHING* YOU'VE EVER SEEN THAT CAN COMPARE.
AND UNLESS YOU START *LISTENING* TO ME, THEY'LL BE SCRAPING YOUR WEE MANLY BITS OFF THE *ROCKS* BEFORE TOO LONG.
AS I SEE IT, YOU'VE GOT TWO CHOICES. RUN FOR *SAFETY* OR STAND AND *FIGHT*.
I WOULD STRONGLY CAST MY VOTE FOR RUNNING.
NO. I SHALL NOT RUN, NOR SHALL I FIGHT. IF THIS IS MY JUDGMENT, I SHALL STAND AND FACE IT.
WHY? BECAUSE OUR MAD BASTARD WHO ART IN HEAVEN DECIDED YOU'RE ON THE WRONG SIDE OF HIS *POXY* GAME?
YOU'RE A BLOODY *FOOL*, COVENANT.
I AM BUT A MAN...
...NO, NOT EVEN THAT... LESS THAN THAT...
WHO AM I TO QUESTION THE WILL OF HEAVEN?
I AM AN ANGEL. A PERFECT VESSEL OF GOD'S UNQUESTIONABLE DIVINITY. CREATED BY THE GRACE AND GLORY OF OUR BENEFICENT LORD.
A CREATURE OF PURE LIGHT.

BUT THOUGH I AM AN ANGEL, I DO NOT BRING AID TO THE POOR OR NURSE THE SICK.
I DO NOT COMFORT THE LOST AND THE WAYWARD THROUGH THEIR LONG DARK NIGHT OF THE SOUL. I DO NONE OF THESE THINGS.
I EXIST FOR ONE REASON: TO KILL.
I AM A HOLY ASSASSIN, THE LANCE OF GOD.
AND I HAVE LEARNED TO LOVE THESE DELICATE, FLAWED BEINGS. TO LOVE THEIR FRAGILE LIVES. THEIR SMALL VICTORIES AND SUBTLE KINDNESSES.
I KNOW I AM NOT WORTHY OF THE TITLE "ANGEL", BECAUSE I HAVE STOOD BY THOSE WHO ARE.
AND NOW, I AM CALLED TO ACT BUT DO NOT KNOW IF I CAN.
I HAVE DOUBTS ABOUT MY OWN CAUSE. WHY DOES HEAVEN DO SO MUCH TO PUNISH THE WICKED, YET SO LITTLE TO COMFORT THE RIGHTEOUS?
AND I AM AT A CROSSROADS.
FOR MANY CENTURIES NOW, I HAVE LIVED MY LIFE IN HUMILITY AND OBSCURITY, SECRETED AWAY IN THE CONVENTS AND CLOISTERS OF MORTALS.
LORD, PLEASE, GIVE ME A SIGN...

THE HAWK HUNTS THE FIELD MOUSE. THAT IS THE WAY OF NATURE. THAT IS THE WAY OF ALL THINGS. SO BE IT.
WHO AM I TO QUESTION THE SCHEMES OF HEAVEN?
IF HEAVEN SO WILLS IT, I SHALL BE A *HAWK.*

AAAAH! NO! MERCY, PLEASE GOOD SIR! MERCY!
TELL ME WHAT YOU SAW! I KNOW THE BLACK KNIGHT PASSED NEAR HERE.
BY MARY'S TEAT, SIR, I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU--!
AAAH! I WAS IN THE WOODS...POACHING SIR... I SAW A KNIGHT ON HORSEBACK, WITH A MAN AND A WOMAN.
WHO WERE THEY?
I DON'T KNOW. I DON'T -- PLEASE SIR! THE WOMAN... SHE WAS WITH CHILD. THAT'S ALL I SAW.
WHERE?
NOT FAR. NEAR THE OLD ABBEY. I SWEAR THAT'S ALL I KNOW --

ABBEY OF SAINTE-BARBE.
I REMEMBER THE DAY YOU WERE BORN, MY LITTLE ONE. A WILD AND MOONLESS EVENING, THE WEST WIND BRINGING THE PROMISES OF STRANGE TIDINGS.
THE ABBEY WAS STILL IN AN UPROAR. ONLY TWO NIGHTS BEFORE, SISTER IMMACULATA HAD DISAPPEARED FROM HER ROOM. THERE WAS SOMETHING SINISTER IN THE AIR.
IT WAS A BLESSING I SUPPOSE THAT YOUR PARENTS WERE BROUGHT HERE. PREPARING FOR YOUR ARRIVAL GAVE US ALL SOMETHING TO DO.
AND FOR A MOMENT, ALL WE SAW WAS YOU. A BRIGHT AND PERFECT LITTLE ANGEL.
THIS IS GOD'S TRUE MIRACLE, IS IT NOT?
A LITTLE GIRL...
REYNARD... HOW IS SHE...? I CAN'T SEE...?
SHE IS *BEAUTIFUL*. THE VERY LIGHT OF HEAVEN.
LET HER REST NOW, MY FRIEND. SHE IS TIRED.
BUT SOON WE WERE STIRRED FROM OUR REVERIE. THE PEAL OF THE BELL TOWER DISPELLED OUR QUIET JOY.
WHAT IS THAT? WHAT IS GOING ON?
*LOOK! OUT **THERE!***

I'LL NEVER FORGET THAT SIGHT AS LONG AS I LIVE.
IT WAS AS IF THE DEVIL HIMSELF WALKED THIS WORLD AND BROUGHT THE KETTLES OF HELL TRAILING BEHIND HIM.
AT FIRST IT WAS JUST A BRIGHT GLOW ON THE HORIZON, LIKE A FIREFLY FLITTING AMONG THE TALL GRASS.
BUT THE FLAMES SOON GREW, DEVOURING, LIKE A THING ALIVE...
THE CRACKLING AND SNAPPING OF ITS JAWS AS IT CONSUMED EVERYTHING IN ITS PATH...
WITHIN MOMENTS IT SEEMED AS IF THE WHOLE WORLD WAS CONSUMED IN FIRE. EVEN INSIDE THE ABBEY WALLS WE COULD FEEL THE HEAT.
BUT THE FLAMES GREW HIGHER STILL. AND ABOVE IT ALL, THE MOST INHUMAN VOICE I HAD EVER HEARD.
COVENANT! WHERE ARE YOU?! SHOW YOURSELF, YOU MALIGNANT LITTLE DUNG-BEETLE!
I'LL TORCH THE WHOLE BLOODY COUNTRYSIDE IF THAT'S WHAT IT TAKES TO SCARE YOU OUT!

NEARBY...
THERE IT IS. THE HELLSPAWN. THE DEVIL'S INFERNAL SOLDIER. A BLACK AND UNHOLY CURSE UPON THIS WORLD.
WHY DOES IT JUST STAND THERE, WAITING LIKE A DUMB ANIMAL? I KNOW IT SEES ME. IT IS SOME TRICK, SOME SUBTERFUGE.
THE HELLSPAWN ARE CLEVER AND ARE BORN DECEIVERS, BUT HAVE NO REAL INTELLIGENCE. THEIR BRAINS ARE ADDLED BY SIN. WHAT COULD IT BE UP TO?
WHY IS IT LOOKING AT ME LIKE THIS?
I AM AFRAID. I AM ASHAMED TO ADMIT IT, BUT I AM AFRAID. IT HAS BEEN CENTURIES SINCE I LAST BATTLED, AND THAT ENDED IN DISASTER.
I HAVE GROWN SOFT. MY LINGERING IN THE MORTAL WORLD HAS TURNED MY WARRIOR'S HEART TO A MUSHY PULP. I MUST HARDEN IT AGAIN.
I MUST FIND MY RESOLVE...
...AND DO WHAT MUST BE DONE.

HAAAH! HELLSPAWN! I RETURN YOU TO THE DARK PIT FROM WHICH YOU WERE BORNE!
WHAT IS IT DOING?
WHY DOES IT JUST STAND THERE. IT'S AS IF..
IT IS ALMOST AS IF IT WANTS TO DIE..

I PULL MY STROKE AT THE LAST MOMENT SOMETHING IS NOT RIGHT HERE
WHAT GAME DO YOU PLAY? HOW DARE YOU STAND THERE, ARMS OPEN AS IF TO MOCK OUR SAVIOR!
YOU SHALL NOT TRICK ME, FOUL BEAST!
WHAT HAVE YOU TO SAY FOR YOURSELF BEG ME FOR MERCY! CURSE ME! SPITE ME!

DAMNATION! SAY SOMETHING!
COVENANT!
SOMETHING IS WRONG. OVER THE RISE, I SEE SMOKE I HEAR THE BELLOWING OF A MADMAN.
THAT VOICE... IT WAS THE MAN I DID BATTLE WITH, MISTAKING HIM FOR THE HELLSPAWN *
WHAT COULD THIS MEAN?
THOSE FLAMES, THEY LOOK AS IF THEY ARE COMING FROM...
THE ABBEY!
*LAST ISSUE

WELL, I'LL BE SKINNED AND OILED. THIS SHOULD PROVE MOST INTERESTING
I COULD SCARCELY HAVE PLANNED THIS BETTER MYSELF
AND AT LEAST THAT FOOL COVENANT HAS MANAGED TO NOT GET HIMSELF KILLED QUITE YET THAT'S A SMALL MIRACLE IN ITSELF
HEAVEN IS NOT WHAT YOU BELIEVE IT TO BE, IS IT, HELLSPAWN?
MARK THIS WELL, MY FRIEND THIS IS A GAME FAR GREATER IN SCOPE THAN YOU CAN IMAGINE
IT HAS GONE ON SINCE THE BEGINNING OF TIME AND WILL CONTINUE ON LONG AFTER YOU HAVE BEEN DISCARDED FROM THE PLAYING BOARD
AND IT IS NOT A SPORT AT WHICH I PLAN ON LOSING...
THE ABBEY MY HOME MY SISTERS WHAT CAN I DO? WHAT DOES THAT MADMAN WANT?
MY BATTLE RIBBONS PULL AT ME, URGING ME TO FINISH THE JOB BUT I CAN'T STAND BY AND..
UNEARTHLY WITCH!

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IS THIS WHAT HEAVEN STANDS FOR! WE PLAY OUR SILLY BATTLES WHILE INNOCENTS SUFFER AND DIE?! HOW DARE YOU STAND IN JUDGMENT OF ME!
UUGGGHN!
IT HAS BEEN AGES SINCE I FELT A STR KE LIKE THAT I WASN'T PREPARED I FORGOT WHAT TRUE PAIN FEELS LIKE
BUT H S WORDS WOUND ME DEEPER THAN HIS BLOWS
HAVE I COMPLETELY LOST MYSELF? AM I TRULY NO BETTER THAN H M?

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HE STOOD ABOVE ME FOR A MOMENT. HE LOOKED AT ME AS IF I WERE AN INSECT. A THING BENEATH HIS CONTEMPT
AND THEN HE LEFT. FASTER THAN EVEN I WOULD HAVE SUSPECTED.
HE BOUNDED UPON HIS STEED AND THUNDERED OFF INTO THE NIGHT
RIDING INTO THE BLOWING FIRES IN THE DISTANCE DOING THE VERY THING I WISH I HAD THE COURAGE TO DO
SO MUCH HAPPENED THAT NIGHT. MY LITTLE ONE AND WE CAME SO CLOSE TO LOSING YOU
I WILL NOT TELL YOU EVERYTHING I THOUGHT I SAW
THE MEMORY PLAYS TRICKS ON YOU WHEN YOU GET TO BE AS OLD AS I AM
BUT I WILL SAY THIS. IT WAS A NIGHT OF MIRACLES.

THE ABBEY WAS IN CHAOS. EVERYONE RUNNING FOR THEIR LIVES, COUNTING NOSES TO SEE WHO MIGHT STILL BE TRAPPED INSIDE.
THE MADMAN KEPT SHOUTING, THREATENING. IT WAS ALL I COULD DO TO KEEP FROM FAINTING.
HE HAD SISTER MARGARET BY THE THROAT, PROMISING TO KILL HER IF THE OBJECT OF HIS OBSESSION DID NOT PRESENT HIMSELF
COVENANT! WHERE ARE YOU, YOU PISS-FACED CUR! I CAN FEEL YOU OUT THERE, I CAN FEEL YOUR EYES IN THE NIGHT!
AND THEN HE APPEARED, OUT OF THE SHADOWS, THIS DARK KNIGHT ERRANT, SPED BY THE HOOVES OF A GREAT STALLION.
AN AVENGING ANGEL.
SHUT YOUR BLOODY MOUTH, DUBLANC, AND GET OUT OF MY WAY!
AAAAGH!

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YOU CRUSTY OLD TURD!
YOU CUT OFF MY HAND! I SHALL P SS ON YOUR GRAVE FOR THIS!
DO YOU STILL NOT UNDERSTAND? YOU ARE NOTHING! YOU ARE NOT EVEN WORTH KILLING!
I'VE SEEN ENOUGH BLOOD TO LAST ME A THOUSAND LIFE-TIMES. I WILL NOT ADD YOURS TO IT.
AND YOU... WHY DON'T YOU MAKE YOURSELF USEFUL?

I CONFESS THERE WERE THINGS I SAW THAT NIGHT I STILL DO NOT UNDERSTAND.
AS I TOLD YOU, THERE WAS MADNESS AND FIRE AND SMOKE
BUT SOON IT BECAME CLEAR THAT YOU AND YOUR MOTHER WERE STILL TRAPPED INSIDE THE ABBEY.
MY GIRLS! LET ME GO, DAMN YOU!
STOP! YOU'LL BE NO GOOD TO THEM DEAD.
YOUR FATHER TRIED TO RUN IN AFTER YOU, BUT PERE DOMINO STOPPED HIM. IT WOULD HAVE BEEN SUICIDE
THE FLAMES LICKED HIGHER AND HIGHER, I THOUGHT THE DAY OF JUDGMENT HAD FINALLY COME. I FELL TO MY KNEES AND BEGAN TO RECITE MY ROSARY
THE BLACK KNIGHT RUSHED INTO THE FIRE, TRYING TO REACH THOSE TRAPPED INSIDE.
BUT HE WOULD NOT BE THE ONLY ONE

THERE COMES A TIME IN EACH OF OUR LIVES WHEN WE MUST FACE THE FIRE AND DECIDE WHAT WE REALLY ARE
WE ARE NOT ANGELS AND WE ARE NOT DEVILS. WE ARE MORTALS AND WE ARE FREE TO CHOOSE THE ROAD WE WALK.
ENOUGH!
SOME OF US RISE TO THE CHALLENGE AND SOME FALL SHORT. BUT THE VICTORY, I THINK, IS IN THE TRYING
I RENOUNCE MY MANTEL AND REFUSE MY CALLING!
I DON'T CLAIM TO UNDERSTAND THIS, BUT ALL AT ONCE I LOOKED UP AND OUR LITTLE IMMACULATA WAS BACK AMONG US, DASHING INTO THE INFERNO TRYING TO SAVE THE POOR TRAPPED CHILD
JUDGE ME AS YOU WILL
RUSHING TO SAVE YOU
OUR PRODIGAL CHILD HAD RETURNED

THE BLACK KNIGHT HAD DRUG SEVERAL SURVIVORS OUT INTO THE CLEAR, BUT HAD NOT YET FOUND YOU.
HE WENT BACK IN, ONE LAST TIME
WHERE?
HERE! OVER HERE!
I AM TRAPPED!
ARE YOU THE MOTHER?
NO, ALAS SHE IS DEAD. GONE TO MEET HER MAKER. I... I... AM NO ONE.
GIVE ME YOUR HAND.
NO THERE IS NO TIME. TAKE THE CHILD.
SHE NEEDS FRESH AIR! QUICKLY!

HURRY!
I WILL BE BACK FOR YOU, GOOD LADY.
GO! NOW!
WELL, LOOK AT THIS. A LITTLE BIRDIE HAS BROKE HER WING AND CANNOT FLY AWAY.
NOT MUCH OF A THREAT WITHOUT YOUR HELM AND LANCE. ARE YOU LASSIE?
WHO ARE YOU?
I AM THE LAST FACE YOU WILL EVER SEE, YOU MURDEROUS WHORE.
I'VE WANTED TO DO THIS FOR YEARS...

I CANNOT SAY WHAT HAPPENED TO THE BLACK KNIGHT. I REMEMBER YOUR FATHER FALLING TO HIS KNEES, WEEPING, THANKING HIM FOR SAVING HIS LITTLE GIRL.
THE KNIGHT SPOKE A FEW WORDS TO HIM, BUT I COULD NOT HEAR WHAT WAS SAID.
HE THEN RODE OFF INTO THE NIGHT, NEVER LOOKING BACK.
THERE HAVE BEEN MANY STORIES AND RUMORS OF COURSE. I AM SURE EVEN YOU HAVE HEARD SOME OF THEM FROM THE VILLAGE CHILDREN ON MARKET DAY.
BUT WHO HE WAS AND HOW HE CAME TO US WILL ALWAYS REMAIN A MYSTERY. BUT I THANK GOD FOR SENDING HIM.
NOR DO WE KNOW WHAT HAPPENED TO IMMACULATA. WE COULD NOT FIND HER BODY IN THE RUBBLE OF THE OLD ABBEY.
PERE DOMINO THOUGHT PERHAPS IT WAS A MIRACLE, THAT SHE WAS RAISED UP TO HEAVEN LIKE THE VIRGIN MARY. I CAN'T SAY FOR SURE, BUT I WOULD LIKE TO BELIEVE SO.
BUT WE DO KNOW IT WAS SHE WHO DELIVERED YOU INTO THE HANDS OF THE KNIGHT ERRANT, SO HE MIGHT BRING YOU SAFELY OUT OF THE FIRE.
AND I WILL ALWAYS REMEMBER HER BRIGHT FACE AND KIND SMILE.

I REMEMBER IT EVERY TIME I LOOK AT YOU, YOU WHO WERE NAMED FOR HER.
AND THAT IS HOW YOU CAME TO US, IMMACULATA.
YOUR FATHER WAS SO HEARTBROKEN WHEN HE LOST YOUR MOTHER. HE LEFT YOU HERE WITH US, SO THAT WE MAY RAISE YOU AND GIVE YOU A PROPER EDUCATION.
BUT HE WILL COME FOR YOU ONE DAY. HE SWORE THAT HE WOULD.
NOW YOU KNOW WHERE YOU CAME FROM AND WHO YOU WERE NAMED FOR. AND I KNOW THAT YOU WILL GROW TO BE WORTHY OF HER MEMORY.
GOD MOVES IN STRANGE WAYS, AND SOMETIMES HIS WILL SEEMS CRUEL. BUT WHO ARE WE TO QUESTION HIS WISDOM?
COME, LITTLE ONE. IT IS NEARLY TIME FOR VESPERS.

DARKNESS